35 cents

Listen,

Brother!

By ROBERT F. WILLIAMS

LISTEN, BROTHER

by **Robert F. Williams**

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Cover picture by SNCC, from "The Movement." It shows Birmingham people at funeral of little girls whose Sunday school was bombed in 1963.

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A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

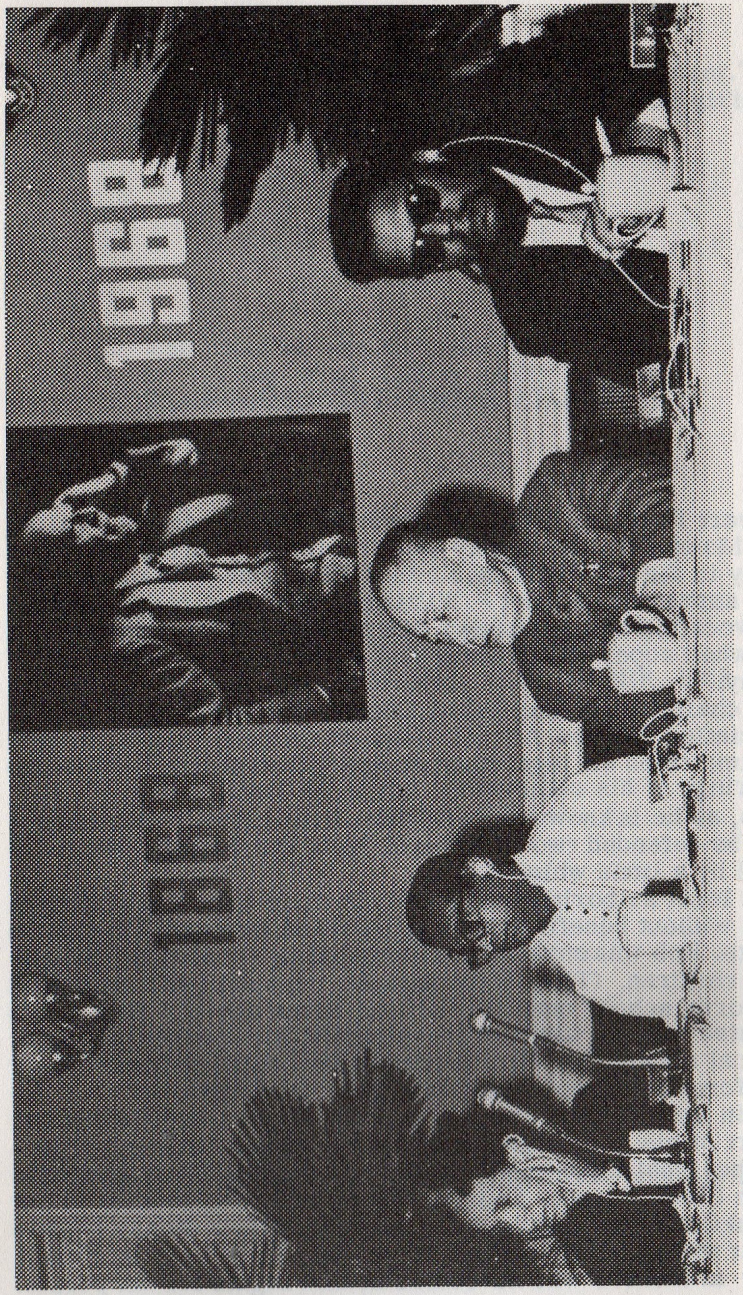
Robert Franklin Williams was born 43 years ago in Monroe, N.C. Monroe is the county seat of Union County, and Union County is the hot bed of the Ku Klux Klan. From this haven for white supremacy Robert F. Williams rose to international fame by advocating and practicing self defense for black people at a time when super passiveness and submission was the order of the day.

As chairman of the Union County Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Robert Williams tried all legal court means open to him to relieve the sufferings of his community. But to no avail.

Rob, as he is known to his friends, first came to prominence when he defended two little black boys age 7 and 9, who were kissed by a little white girl.

The local authorities arrested the little boys and held them in jail without benefit of legal counsel and without notifying the parents. Rob was enraged. He immediately set about to release these children. (They were actually convicted and sentenced to reform school until they should reach age 21.) With Rob's dedicated efforts, national pressure and international ridicule, the local authorities were forced to free these children -- but not before they forced their families out of town.

Again Rob Williams was to gain the respect, admiration and support of his people and progressive whites, when he organized the local black men into the only legally chartered rifle club in Union County. This brave band of men were soon to put their skills to the test in defense of Dr. Albert Perry's home when it was attacked by the Ku Klux Klan. Dr. Perry is a black doctor in Monroe who advocated human rights for all people.



Celebrating the 100th birthday of Dr. W.E.B. DuBois in Peking. Left to right: Shirley Graham DuBois, editor of Freedomways; R.D. Senanayake, Secretary General of Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau; Chen Yi, Foreign Minister of People's China; and Robert F. Williams.

He didn't refuse help to poor whites who couldn't pay him. For his good deeds he was framed and accused of giving a white woman an illegal abortion.

Calling on the training he had gotten in the U.S. Marines, Rob placed his men in strategic places around Dr. Perry's house. When the Klan came for their usual Sunday afternoon sport of shooting up the black community and in this particular instance Dr. Perry's house, they met with a frightening surprise. Their fire was met with fire, forcing them to abandon their wives, children and cars and flee for their lives to the woods.

In the summer of 1961 many "Freedom-Riders" descended upon Monroe to try to persuade the people to be passive and maybe to get an idea of what was meant by self-defense. These Freedom-Riders, along with the local black youth, had many demonstrations in downtown Monroe around the City Hall. Each time they indicated that they were passive, they were insulted, spat on, and beaten back into Newtown, where they were given safety by a well-armed black community.

The presence of middle class white northern youth, the many trips to Cuba, the friendship with Premier Fidel Castro, along with the militant actions of Robert Williams and his supporters, proved unbearable to the local Klansmen. They set out to get Rob.

The weekend of August 25-27 was the weekend the Klansmen had picked to rid themselves of him. Their many previous attempts on his life had failed. Friday night the phone rang incessantly with abusive calls and threats. On Saturday cars loaded with whites would speed through the community, fire and in turn, be fired upon.

Rob recalled that most acts of particular viciousness seemed to occur on Sunday. He remarked that all the hate and rancor the racists could not extract from a liquor bottle on Saturday, they seem to find on Sunday.

Sure enough, the major attack came that day. When a young white woman attempted to enter a car heading back to Newtown after a demonstration, it was at this point the racists let loose their most venomous blow.

One aimed a rifle at James Forman's head and pulled the trigger. Fortunately for Forman, the gun failed to fire. This enraged the racist so much, he took the stock of the rifle and attempted to bash in Jim's head. The Freedom-Riders, along with the local youth, were arrested, thrown into jail and denied medical attention.

Meantime back in Newtown, we heard the news. Black men 300 strong came to Rob with loaded guns, awaiting orders. At this moment a lone puny white cop drove up and stated "All you niggers are under arrest."

The angry people were only seconds away from taking his life. The respect and confidence the people had in Rob was his only salvation. Rob sent the cop back downtown with a demand to the authorities for medical attention and release for our forces that had been arrested. When the authorities did not respond, the angered community stopped the very next car containing whites that came through the community. In this car was a middle age white couple. They were to pay dues with their lives.

Again Rob interceded. He allowed the couple to come into his house, use the phone to relate the critical conditions to the authorities.

Learning the authorities planned to come in to destroy Newtown, the people decided they should not only kill the Stegalls but burn down all of Monroe. This could have been easily done because there were only 17 cops and the police arsenal was in the heart of the black community. Calmer heads decided that the best policy would be for Rob to leave. It was felt that he had proved that one did not necessarily have to die for standing up to the white power structure. Rob Williams, his wife and two boys left. First to Canada, then to Cuba, where he was given political asylum by Fidel Castro and the Cuban people. He remained in Cuba for three years, then went to the People's Republic of China where he is presently.

This writer was guest in the Williams home that eventful weekend in August,1961. The white couple that Rob saved later charged Rob with kidnaping (obviously at the instigation of the police and Klan). As a result of my presence, I was also tried and convicted of kidnaping and sentenced to 16 to 20 years. Three others along with Rob faced the same charge.

The story is detailed in the book, "Negroes with Guns," by Robert F. Williams. Rob is still publishing his newsletter, The Crusader, mailing it from 1 Tai Chi Chang, Peking, China.

MAE MALLORY

LISTEN, BROTHER

Like a miserable and shivering dog, you cuddle in your foxhole. You are Cpl. Nat Turner. But who in the hell is Nat Turner... Who cares? You try to snatch a bit of fleeting and ever-elusive peace in the ominous lull between battles, between joyous memories of yesterday and the present shadows of death. You think of home. You think of peace. To you, peace was a long time ago. Peace was home. Peace was the good old times spent in the company of and communion with loved ones. Remember the fun with the old gang, the way-out chick you finally made? Your soul goes chasing after memories. You walk the bustling streets of the ghetto. The ghetto is a miserable place. No one should have to live in prison-like ghettos, but Oh, how you would like to be there now. You hate it, and yet, your roots are buried there. It is home. It is a drab place. It is a wretched place, but it has soul. And to those who understand it, it reflects the soul of an oppressed but dauntless people. From the ghetto you hear the tangled voices of laughter, of curses spawned of intermittent love and hate. Somewhere in the night a juke box blares and Lou Rawls moans "Tobacco Road." The night is scented with soul food. The boys on the corner are shooting the bull. The countless stoops are loaded with faceless images outlined in the shadows. In the ghetto night is short, much too short, because the curtain of night raises to expose an ugly world, and the sweatshops, if you are lucky enough to have a home there in Chuck's slave camp. The cops... That's another thing ... Something else again. They are the enemy occupiers of an alien land.

"... her greatest joy in life, that of mother and child"

You shiver in your foxhole. It's a drab and barren world. You cling desperately to the past, to memories once considered trivia. Now the little things mean so much. They really count. The past is everything. Perhaps there is no future. The future is more vague and distant than the past. The intense sounds of night murmur like a witch's morbid lullaby. The gentle stir of the tropical wind transmits the rancorous stench of death and decay. Somewhere in the vastness of night a distraught mother struggles to restrain and muffle her tormented moans of irrepressible agony. Her brown, thin and calloused hands are useless in the moment of the greatest need of a mother's comforting and life-giving touch. The ghoulish scent of burnt flesh pervades the primitive bamboo shack. Horrible and cruel death has claimed her greatest joy in life, that of mother and child, the tender touch of a mother's loving care is denied. The flaming hell of napalm has masterfully consummated the perfection of sadistic butchers. These are the beneficiaries of racist America's blessings of democracy. This is barbaric America's version of salvation from Communism ...and brother, you are a member of the big mob of savage klansmen who maim and kill in the name of Christian democracy.

Back in America you used to wonder how a howling mob of fiendish crackers could savagely mutilate, maim, burn and lynch what they called "niggers" without the slightest pang of conscience, without the slightest emotion of human compassion and mercy. You remember Emmet Till. You remember Mack Charles Parker. You remember the four little black girls who had their heads blown off while praying in a Birmingham Sunday School. You remember Medgar Evers, Cpl. Roman Duckworth and Lt. Col. Penn. There are countless others, some nameless, some forgotten. They, too, were the beneficiaries of the American concept of democracy for colored people. Back home your people are the targets of white supremacy racism, of the white man's affinity for terrorizing, maiming and butchering colored people. It has ever been such in the white man's America and you will find the conditions unchanged when you return. But now, Chuck has given you status. You have been given a license to be a junior

nigger partner in a brutal campaign of exterminating colored people. The man expects you to show your boundless appreciation for the Uncle Tom right to kill freedom-loving colored people like a Mississippi white savage. Now, you are the brutal cop. The man with the gun. The licensed killer in the colored ghetto.

Mother and father at coffin of child bombed in Sunday school massacre at Birmingham, Alabama

You cuddle in your foxhole like a vicious but obedient dog. The rains come and you are wet. The night chill comes and you shiver. The noonday sun comes and you swelter. Combat comes and you see your buddies die. You tremble from the thought that soon the buzzards and the ants may fatten themselves on your wasted and plundered flesh. You feel sick inside. Tension escalates in you until you feel that you are going to explode. Your shattered mind picks up threads of an almost forgotten song ... CHANGE IS GONNA COME ... Now really, is it? Black men have been thinking this since the black man, Crispus Attucks, the first to die in the American Revolution, fell in Boston Common. The theme is heartening, but the related facts are cold and dismal. Like all of the black veterans before you, you are at war, cannon fodder and trained killer dogs in a white man's crusade to safeguard ruthless white power. Even the devil white man marvels at your dog-like loyalty. The dog has long been heralded as the white man's best and most loyal friend, but now Whitey says the nigger soldier is the most loyal animal in his devotion to his white master. Even the big white daddies in Washington are bragging about the good showing of their loyal "Nigras" in Vietnam. War is hell. The man doesn't know what's on your mind. He doesn't know what you feel in your heart, because to be black in the white man's segregated America is a hurting thing...

Your outfit's pulled back. You're in the rear area. In another war in another day, this would mean safety. Now everywhere the battle rages. No place is out of the war zone. The sight of your uniform shakes things up. Its like the sight of a brutal thug cop in the ghetto. The people get riled at the least provocation. Trouble here, though, is the fact that the people are armed, and man, they don't have to take no whole lotta stuff from nobody. Comes weekend you spit and polish and make for the scene to drop a few bucks and waste some hard playing chick. Saigon is a wild scene. You can say that it jumps but it ain't quite Lenox Avenue, South Street, Black Bottom or Bronzeville.

Now brother, what kind of old off the wall shit is this?

Chuck is a plain despoiler. He's the natural devil. Even in war, even while piously boasting that "we" are in Vietnam to secure democracy from Communism, the man sets the scene up to favor himself and the black man is squeezed out. We get what is left. It's America all over again. The white man will be a white man. Race will tell. Just like the spooks used to say: "Naught's a naught, a figure's a figure, all's for the white man and none for the nigger." Even in war-torn Saigon, the crackers don't want no nigger in the ritz joints where they hang out. Man, those cats will even go so far as to want to lynch a dark cat about a fine high brown chick that they consider special white man's meat. Man, if you really want to make a play without having to open up a second front, hang out with the spooks in soulville. Man, Chuck officer and the M.P.s are a gas. They seem to get a big kick out of making life miserable for the brothers...

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The DAR Says Crispus Attucks Was a Rioter, Not a Revolutionist

New York Post 4/15/65

By BETTY FLYNN

WASHINGTON (CDN) — Crispus Attucks, popularly thought of as the first Negro killed in the American Revolution, was actually a rioter, according to the Daughters of the American Revolution.

"It's a misnomer to think of him as a part of the American Revolution," said a DAR aide at national headquarters.

"He actually took part in a riot which was held before the established date" of the American Revolution, April 19, 1775, DAR officials maintain, when the "shot that was heard around the world" was fired at the Battle of Lexington.

Attucks was killed during the Boston Massacre in 1770, when a group of American demonstrators, Attucks among them, was fired on by the British.

Some scholars consider him a significant figure in Negro and American history.

Convention Opening

The DAR celebrates the beginning of the Revolution every year with a national convention in Washington. This year's convocation begins Monday.

The DAR has been a target of criticism since it refused to allow Marian Anderson to sing on the stage of the DAR-owned Constitution Hall in Washington in 1939.

It was then that Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the DAR in protest, spotlighting national attention on the incident.

The DAR counters that it has no racial or religious requirements, simply that a woman prove descent from a participant in Revolutionary activities.

Most Negroes at that time were slaves, they say, and slaves didn't keep records. Therefore it would be difficult for Negroes to get in, because it is necessary to prove one's lineage, they say.

The DAR is a group of 187,000 American women who can prove their lineal descent from a "man or woman who aided the cause of or fought in the movement for American independence," said Mrs William Henry Sullivan Jr., president-general of the DAR.

Someone at a press conference yesterday asked Mrs. Sullivan if the DAR, which had no Negro members, would admit a Negro, if she could prove lineage descent say, from Crispus Attucks.

A male DAR staff member piped up from the rear of the room. "He was just a boy, and besides, he was never married."

The World Book Encyclopedia indicates that Attucks was nearly 50 when he was killed.

The DAR does have a number of members of American Indian descent, supports schools for American Indians on reservations, and also two schools for underprivileged children in the South.

"But they are in all-white areas," said a woman staff member. "We don't have any dark children."

You have been to the main strip. You've had your fling. You have had your nigger fun in a dingy soulville. The blare of the juke box has faded in the distance. The funky, bluesy music lingers far back in your subconscious mind. Somehow its always there, when you're relaxed enough to hear it. Its the soul of Black folks. It's the timer that puts the rhythm in our lives, the soul in our dark bodies. You're on a military bus. You're headed for a base camp. Now that leave is over, the forces are one again. We are integrated. I can hear that red-faced cracker from Georgia saying over and over, as if practicing how to say it and keep a straight face to trick the niggers; over and over he says, "You are fighting here for democracy. You are fighting to stop un-Godly communism and to give the people of this country a chance to form a democratic and stable government. You are the muscle in America's committment to world democracy. Because of the likes of men like you, our brand of representative democracy will triumph over communist tyranny in the world."

God damn Bro! If we live under democracy in America, ain't no need to try to save nobody who lives under tyranny. If the oppression is worse than Mississippi they's already dead.

As the bus lumbers on through the early morning darkness, the more you start to think the deader you feel inside. Big Chuck says you're in Vietnam fighting for democracy. You pretend to believe him, to go along with the game -- why? You allow yourself to be segregated, even in Vietnam. You are armed and you don't dare resist the man's racist shit -- why? The people at home don't take no more shit off the man... They done plain and told Whitey that this is it. From now on he's gotta bring white ass to get black ass and that's the natural price of meat in the market these days. Even Belle and the sisters are going up besides the man's head for trying to throw a racist curve on dark folks. Even in Mama's last letter she says she gave the boys all the bottles in the house and a few quarters, to buy some gas, so as to put some action on Whitey cop. Bro, the cats back home are even coming up against the man's

machine guns and tanks with bare knuckles. Everywhere in the ghetto the word is:"Brother, are you ready?"Man, those cats are stone for real and they want everybody to state his case, to put it where it's at and tell it like it is. The question is, are you ready to die for black freedom, for black dignity, for yourself. Brother have you broken the chains of the white devil's brainwash? Or is your white mind still imprisoned in a black man's skin that is condemned by a white god to everlasting hell without redemption?

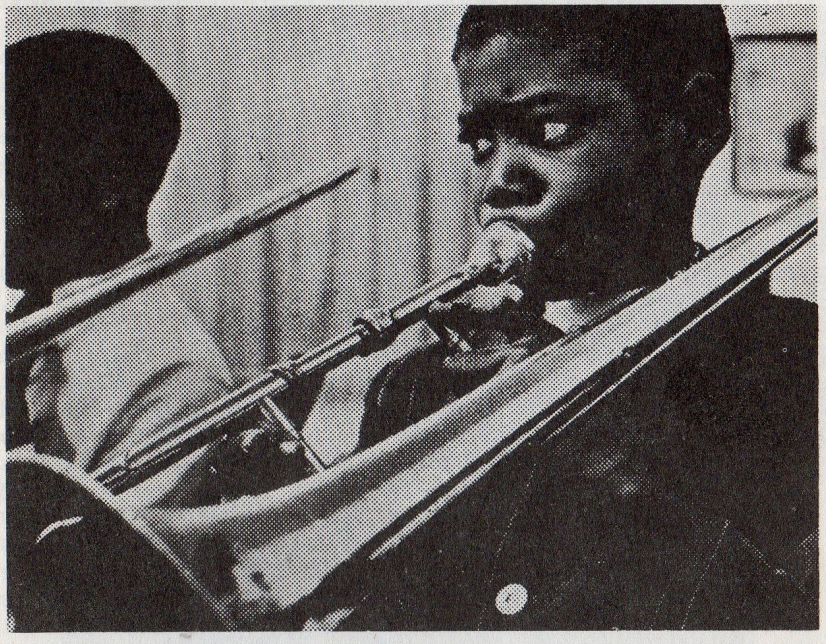
Brother, back home at the drop of Whitey's racist frown you were ready to fight to the death, to storm through a hail of bullets to let the man know that he can't mess around with cats just because they are black. But now, the man puts you in a monkey suit and he can dolt on your loyalty. He can do anything to you and all you do is tuck your tail and take the spite out on colored Vietnamese. Bro, they say clothes make a difference. Damned if you aren't proving it. Niggers in uniform are more passive and Tomish towards the bullshit of Uncle Sam than the brother in patched overalls. "Uncle Sam," now ain't that a thing and a trick. How the hell is white Sam to be looked on as a black man's uncle? Brother, being a black man in the racist white man's world is a hurting thing. To live with yourself, to keep cool, you have to alibi the man to your own heart and the more you alibi for him against your own best interest, the more he is convinced that you are a natural brainless fool. It's a vicious circle. Well, anyway you keep telling yourself like all of the black veterans before you, that things will be better after the war ... that you are earning your rights the hard way ... and that you ain't gonna take no more of that white man's shit when you get back home ... Brother, who is kidding whom? Now let's lay it on the line and tell it like it is! How in the hell can you let Mr. Charlie bring you 10,000 miles from home to bring white man's justice to colored Vietnam NOW, to fight and die NOW in instant action in Vietnam while your freedom has been deferred for 400 years and the man is is still deferring and stalling? Brother, why is the black man's freedom always in the future and everybody else's is now? Listen Brother, you aren't going to be any freer tomorrow than you were yesterday. Like all the other black soldiers throughout America's history when you hit the civvy scene... you are just another hated nigger looking for a home, waiting for Charlie's grudgeful handout...

"People at home don't take no more shit off the man"

The outfit's on the move again. Again you are moving against the wrong foe. Again your bullets are going to be wasted on the wrong "enemy." The Viet Cong is not going to follow you to the ghetto to oppress, terrorize and dehumanize you, but that big burly smiling hypocrite of a cracker commanding you is. He just can't wait to get you back home to cut your balls out and to put old "Shine" back in his place. Who knows, he may even be a Klansman or Minuteman. He may have bombed a black church or tortured a screaming helpless black soul just for the sheer thrill of it. And now, the burly cracker bastard grins at you. To hear him talk he hasn't got a prejudiced bone in his body. Oh, how he has changed since he has been in the service ... He has learned that all people are the same. He may even join the NAACP when he returns. Old Roy and Whitney are the most... Man they have got the white man's toni, but my man Rap, Leroi Jones and the late Malcolm X are 'un-American trouble makers' who keep the good white folks like him from fully committing themselves to the cause of freedom in racist America. Man, you asked that cat if he would invite you to his home to spend some time with his family. He said, "why sure, if they approve of it." Brother, I know better. Those ofays are fleeing to the suburbs like rats from a sinking ship because bloods are moving into their blocks. They are fighting open housing tooth and nail. Yeah, he's changed all right, and he will change again as soon as he sees white power. Bro, the man is solid scared now, that's why he's putting down that I-LOVE-NIGGERS hipe. He's scared stiff of the Viet Cong and it shakes him to think of how he's treated us, and now we are armed. He's scared as hell that we may see through his hipe. He knows if we would start some shit and put a hurting on his ass while he's being all shook up by the Viet Cong, he would be a through cat, finished, all washed up. Both of us together can't beat the Viet Cong, the man wouldn't have a possible chance with us against him too...

Again, you are holding down a foxhole in the advanced perimeter outpost. It is sundown. Great multitutudes of

high flying birds wing their way homeward, racing against the advance of night. You watch them intently as they fade into the vastness of time and distance where the majestic palm trees tower in the forlorn and deserted valley. As the birds vanish, you are young again. You are home again and you hear Grandma muttering, "The creatures and fowls of the earth have their nests, but the son of man has no place to lay his head." Yes, the birds are going home, but you ... not tonight, nor tomorrow, perhaps never. Perhaps you may not even see the sun rise again. Sundown in the ghetto is a popular subject for songwriter's blues. If you but had the command of words to capture what you feel now. If you could only transmit what is in your heart, the passion of your soul; your song would give a new dimension to the blues.



"You are young again"

— But when you're old, they do you this for trying to get work! At a construction site in Philadelphia, Pa. 1964, trying to end jimcrow hiring. Photo by L.G.Henry

It is almost dawn and your mixed up mind is in a twilight state, half asleep and half awake. You are back in school. The day is just starting out. It is time for devotion. In unison, we are reciting the pledge of allegiance. We are black. We are young. We are naive. We believe the words of the pledge are for real: "...one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." And then there is American history...persecuted whites from Europe stream into the Indians' America in quest of religious and political freedom. By dint of hard work and the aid of prayers, they built a new world...They brought black savages from Africa, enslaved them, "Christianized them and civilized them"...you feel grateful because in a cunning way the man has tricked you into it. For the sake of Christianity and civilization, and in defense of white children and white women, the savage red Indians were warred on, were exterminated. The wild Indian was tamed. The white man's six gun won the West and in your innocent ignorance you were glad that the saintly and civilized white man won. Yes, the mighty white man was bound to win because he had God on his side. After all, God is white too and white folks stick together...

Suddenly there are radiant and brilliant flashes in the sky. You can see the countryside by the light of the rocket's red glow. The whole earth quivers and the thunder of bursting shells and rockets almost burst your ear drums. You bite the dirt. You try to burrow deeper into the earth. You desperately feel exposed. This is not a TV flick of cowboy and outgunned Indian. This time the game is Vietnamese and Yankee aggressor. This time the colored man is putting a hurting on Charlie and the traditional dashing cavalry is in as much trouble as the infantry. In your study of Whitey's distorted history your irrational sentiments were misguided and channeled to root and applaud for Chuck's cause. When you went to the flick to see the Tarzan shit about Africa, the man had you in a trick so bad that you cheered white head-hunters in their rape and plunder of Africa, in their murder of primitively armed black men. You thought the mighty white man was born to win because, after all, God too is white and white folks stick together. The slick ofay is a

tricky bastard. Somehow, he has always been able to trick black people into winding up on the wrong side of the fence. He has always been able to trick black people into fighting the wrong cause against the wrong people. Now here you are like a stupid fool, pinned down in Chuck's outpost by colored people's fire. You are defending a cause and a devil that you really ought to be killing. You are as wrong as two left shoes, and you know it.

Dawn comes. The devastating barrage slackens. The big guns and rockets fall silent. Your forward group has been hit hard. The scuttlebutt of the grapevine has it that some of the rear areas have been hit even harder. More of your buddies are dead and wounded. The war is over for them. Those brothers who died, what did they die for? For democracy? Whose democracy? Democracy, that's a crock of shit! Plain and simple, they died for Charlie's right to ride roughshod over colored people, yes to make Vietnam the Mississippi of Asia. Yeah, the man is full of tricks. We have long called him "Charlie" and "Mr. Charlie". The name carries bad connotations, so what does he do? He starts a campaign to call the Viet Cong Charlie to try to shift your hatred for Whitey Charlie onto the colored freedom fighting Vietnamese. After all, perhaps "Charlie" is too good for Whitey. The Hon. Mr. Elijah Muhammad has a more appropriate name for him. He says he is a two legged devil, and when you check out his satanic record you'll find that Mr. Muhammad's really got the goods on the vicious beast...

A student who "sat down" for coffee!

"For democracy? Whose democracy?"

This man was shot 17 times by Newark police last summer for the crime of wanting freedom.

Deadly planes, loaded with rockets and napalm, zoom through the sky. The hunt, the pogrom is on. The screaming eagles of death are vicious, like mad dogs, in their crazed desire to burn, maim and kill the colored flesh of the hard fighting and hardworking Vietnamese. The inevitable command comes down from the big white father to go in pursuit and search of the fighting Vietnamese. Remotely, and almost in a daze, you amble like a grizzly bear out of his cave of hybernation. Like an obedient dog you go in search of a people, fighting to drive invaders from their land. The word is to kill all, burn all, destroy all... what a horrible thing to do to poor colored people with such meagre belongings. You stumble into the valley, you feel sick and numb inside. You can smell the repulsive stench of burnt flesh, of dead and decaying bodies. You see the human carnage of women and children, of old men. How colored they look with their dead eyes frozen in a final moment of petrifying horror and terror. You get an alert signal. The vicious enemy is being flushed from a rickety bamboo shack. A monstrous tank rumbles into position and levels its deadly guns to cover the captives now being flushed from cover with tear gas. Rocket launchers and machine guns are aimed. A frightened, but defiant child emerges. Deep and painracked groans filter from the shack. The defiant child points angrily at the shack. How colored this child is. How poor he is. Finally, with the child in front as a shield the "guardians of democracy" advance into the shack. The prey has been captured. An old granny, with her back raw from napalm, her eyes burnt out, is "another Viet Cong captured by the American forces." No doubt, the old granny got that way while shielding the child from a savage napalm attack.

"How colored they look!"

No, this is not Vietnam, and it's not the U.S., either. It's the Dominican Republic, when the U.S. invaded it in 1965, sending 30,000 U.S. Marines to "keep order." L.G. Henry

Now listen brother, where is your conscience? Don't give me that off the wall shit about your duty. You don't have any duty to Whitey. And while you are invoking this duty shit, please tell me when and where you are going to draw the line. Now don't shuck because this is important. Very much so. You see, the folks back home are more and more coming into open rebellion, like the Vietnamese. The man is becoming more and more repressive and vicious in crushing resistance in the ghetto. Already savage cops and gung ho national guardsmen are ruthlessly and indiscriminately firing fusillades of wild shots and tear gas into ghetto houses and apartments. Already the man is moving tanks against the ghetto. Already he is carrying out on-the-spot executions against innocent and defenseless people. Black women, children and old men are being slaughtered simply because they are black and hated. The sadistic thug-cops and the trigger-happy guardsmen proudly claim that they are merely doing 'their duty.' Is it their duty to kill innocent and defenseless black people? What is your answer to this, Brother, because you are invoking this same excuse for your terror activity in Vietnam? What are you going to do, Brother, when mad dog Chuck commands you to machine gun and napalm your own dear mother, or can a colored mother be dear to colored men? Your mother and your sister are black and when war comes to the ghetto, that makes them an enemy to the man you so loyally serve. When he commands you to kill, will you kill then? You are a stickler for executing duty, you know. Whitey says that the black man hasn't got much human emotion anyway. He says that the black man's family ties don't count for much. Brother, it's just as wrong to butcher another man's innocent mother or kid sister as to kill your own.

Now you take Mohammed Ali, he's a solid black man. He's not about to let no peckerwood dictate who he must hate and kill. He let the man know in no uncertain terms that he can't be used as a white man's killer dog to be sicked at will on colored humanity. Ali could have had it made, if his dignity and self-respect had allowed him to take the shameful and disgusting stance of a hat-in-hand handkerchief-headed Uncle Tom. Well, anyway, as Papa used to say: "It's all in a black man's lifetime ... and there's a special art to learning to live with it, learning to be a nigger." Now it's clear what Papa meant ...

The big push moves on into the jungle. Occasionally you see the grotesque remains of what was once a human being who lived and knew life. Your weary brain is swamped momentarily with a barrage of unrelated thoughts. The group enters a marsh. You sink in mud knee deep. Man, it's a filthy mess ... A nigger in the mud, a nigger and dirt ... what's the difference? You think how Mama used to get all worked up because you escalated action in a shirt or some underwear until it got sorta dingy. She was always cautioning you to clean up and to carry yourself in a sober and respectable way, because the white folks always said that nigger darkies are dirty and immoral. They said they didn't want to eat with a nigger, go to school with him, work next to him or ride the bus in a seat next to him, because niggers are dirty and they smell. To hear them talk, you'd get the idea that a white man's shit don't stink. You are dirty and in the mud now. You feel sweaty and grimy. You need a bath. The sweltering tropical heat makes you miserable. You'd give anything for a bath. You can hardly stand yourself, but now Whitey can stand you more than at any time in your life. Oh, what a difference a war makes! The phony cat can tolerate anything when it suits his purpose.

We have got about five hundred guns, aplenty of lead, but not much powder. I hope you have made a good collection of powder and ball, and will hold yourself in readiness to strike whenever called for and never be out of the way. It will not be long before it will take place.

—Note from a Negro slave insurrectionist, Yorktown, Virginia, circa 1793

I began to direct my attention to this great object, to fulfill the purpose for which, by this time, I felt assured I was intended.

—NAT TURNER, leader of slave insurrection, Southampton County, Virginia, 1831

Compiled by Lorraine Hansberry for SNCC's "The Movement"

You're bringing up the rear, and man, ain't you glad. Texas Slim, your platoon leader, is up front. He's new, the other one got knocked off a few weeks ago. This new stud feels his whiteness. He has an inherent way of making you feel black and separate from his kind. It appears that the outfit is in constant transition these days. Most of the time it is under strength. The V.C.'s aim ain't getting no worse. Because of the turn-overs, new blood and fresh meat is always coming in. Somehow, some guys stand out more than others in a company. There are things about them that you remember. Now you take that big burly peckerwood from Alabama, our new platoon Sgt. Man, no matter how hard he tries to cover his innards, that honky's got a mug that would give him away, even in a hippie love-in. He hates niggers ... all niggers. You wouldn't trust him in a spook cemetary. And then, there's Memphis Willie. He's a soul brother from Memphis, Tennessee. His daddy was killed by the crackers when he was a kid. He saw it all. He can never forget. That brother low more hates a paddy ... all paddies. It's a secret between the brothers that every time Bro Willie goes into battle, he opens up a second front all of his own against Whitey.The V.C. ought to give him a medal. That's one black man's lynching that the white folks are really paying dearly for ... Well, anyway, we don't have to feel guilty about a brother taking vengeance on the devils. These racist paddy officers have got all of our black lives right in the palms of their white hands ... And brother, these white devils are sending us to our deaths like flies. They are making us the bullet shields to save as many white lives as possible. In peace or war, black flesh is always expendable. It's the American way. Yes, there are a few brothers among us who love Charlie madly. The Tomingest among them is Hayes. We call him Hay, and sometimes we just greet him with Hay Tom Hay. His full name is Cpl. Thomas Hayes. He is from Boston. His mother is a white woman and it apes him to hear the brothers calling all whites devils. Well, your mother is black and it apes you to hear the paddies call all black women nigger wenches. Well, anyway, Hay Tom is going to have to make up his mind to either shit or get off the pot. We see some faint hope for him. I guess his case needs a little more time.

The formation halts. The signal is out. Red alert. Your heart dilates to the full extent of your body. Its thunderous drum-like beat dominates your brain. The hot war is on again. A formation of whirlybirds churns loudly overhead. The scuttlebutt is that high brass is inspecting the terrain and mapping strategy for a forthcoming big battle. That's the big brass for you. Safe and sound overhead while they mechanically plan your death. You are just a statistic being fed to a giant computer machine. The alert is downgraded. The enemy is not sighted and there is no ambush. Some poor stiff took a dive into the crucifixion pit. It makes you shudder to think of it. Your flesh crawls ... you see, the whole thing is set up like a jungle animal trap. The big difference is that men are not so fortunate as animals. These pit traps have sharply-pointed bamboo sticks and shafts protruding upward from a pit covered with a thin layer of dirt and foliage. Man, when you fall in there, you get solid crucified like Jesus Christ and you've had it, you have really had it. So, some poor stiff is in the pit. You get intensely mixed emotions. Could it be the old man, the platoon leader? The peckerwood platoon Sgt.? You make way for the litter bearers. The carnage is squealing like a dying pig with his throat cut. The sheats of bamboo are still sticking completely through the mangled form of a human on a stretcher. You feel empty inside, you want to vomit. It's a brother! It's Hay Tom Hay! Your mind tries to escape again, back into the past, back to home.

You can hear a chorus of children's voices: "Eeny, meeny, miney, moe; catch a nigger by his toe, if he hollers let him go"...but Bro, this thing is for real and when you get caught up in it, your case is more like that of Humpty Dumpty...So, Hay Tom Hay got it. He was kinda developing but he never made it. To think of it is kinda sad, like hearing taps blown over a dead brother...

You are luckily back in the base area, not that it is safe here, but because you have managed to survive so long. You feel kinda good. You feel for the first time since landing that you are finally going to make it. You are offered rest and rehabilitation in Australia or Hong Kong. Rest my ass, Bro, I've done my time like a servile prisoner and I want to get the hell outta here and back on the corner. Now can you beat that shit, R & R in Australia. I thought that was Whitey's natural land until I saw some of the dark brothers they brought here to kill Vietnamese. The man wiped out the Aborigine brothers. He wiped out the Maori brothers. He wiped out the American Indians and all of this was done in the name of Christianity and democracy. The man wiped out all the dark brothers he could, and new he sicks us on each other to further accomplish his genocidal designs. Brother, colored people are sure enough being used against themselves by the devil. Brother, it's getting time for some change. It is getting time for us to stand and put a hurting on our real enemy. What has a barefoot peasant in Vietnam ever done to you? How is he a threat to your democracy? You are a threat to yourself and should be shuffled off to the crazy house if you believe that you've got any democracy to lose, let alone defend. Brother, colored is colored and you know that Charlie has always been against that. The man is snowing you. He claims that it is a straight case of Communism, pure and simple. Brother, was your great, great grandmother a Communist? Is your mother a Communist? Were the four little girls in the Birmingham Sunday School Communists? Is this why they were hated and butchered? Brother, isn't it about time you started questioning Whitey's motives? Brother, how much shit does it take to wake you up? When the D.I. called you jug head, he meant it; he was for real. R & R. Hell no! I wanna go — HOME! The very thought of R & R is a flashback to sobering reality. In action at the front, there is one big dirty colorless world, according to the racist honky's hypocritical bull. But back on the swinging scene, the one world of integration disintegrates. It falls apart. You are a dirty nigger again and R & R means RETURNED AND REJECTED.

O.K. You took the shit and never made no action here. All the time you kept hoping it would start. You always waited for another brother to start the show. You didn't feel yourself to be the leading type. There was some petty action in soulville and in the P.X. a few times, but you didn't get in on the happenings. It's been as tense as hell though ever since you landed here. Anytime, the fuse could blow. A whole lotta the brothers are ready. A few more of them long hot summers with several Newarks and Detroits and Brother, I tell you no lie, Charlie's ass shall have had it. If you don't get no happenings here, you know you'll get it on the corner when you get back to raceland. The boys will want to know what kind of action you are bringing back from Vietnam and that will be the one positive thing about riding with Chuck's Klan gang. Back home, it's different. When the shit starts, you won't have any choice. You will be the 'gooks' then. It will be your time to get burnt. It will be your house on fire, your mother burnt or machine-gunned. And your resistance will be just as fierce as the Viet Cong's and you will wish a million times that you had joined him to put a permanent hurting on Whitey's ass while you had the good material and the upper hand.

Clubbed by the cops, he refuses to go down. — Newark, June, 1967.

"You know you'll get it on the corner, when you get back to raceland" — like in Chicago, summer of 1967. Photo by Henry.

Now listen Brother, you have been burning for years to put some action on Chuck Whitey, but somehow, now that you have got the stuff to work with you just can't seem to get around to making the play. It's like walking in a dream when you have almost made a scene. It's like, say you are reaching for a fine chick and the very instant you touch her after a long and exhausting pursuit, the very moment she responds, and in that certain way that you know that she had been overcome, the fire watch cat screams reveille like a crazy brass ass monkey. You will be making it for home soon -- sprung for good. O.K. So you messed around and let Charlie get off scot free as far as you are concerned, but you have one consolation. You know that the brothers in the ghetto are making action against the man. Well, your day will come. Every brother's got a role to play and there is always a best time to play it. Brother, just you wait! You'll see that I am not jiving. You'll see that this brother is solid for real.

Man, a nigger is a bitch. He can always find some reason for not fighting the man. He can always find some reason to hesitate, to do nothing, to acquiesce and abdicate the throne of manhood. The spook is always derelict in his duty to his own people, in his duty to himself. He attends the white man's duty now and his own the day after tomorrow and later. Now take the case of black cats getting Congressional Medals of Honor for bravery above and beyond the call of duty. It's a crying shame, a Goddam crying shame. A nigger with a medal for bravery and he's too damn chicken to defend the honor of his own mother from Whitey's insults and dehumanization. When it comes to protecting his own people, a nigger soldier ain't got no honor. In his brainwash book, his only and sole duty is to Boss Charlie. There must be some fantastic catch to the shit, after all, God is white and white people stick together. They all are gonna judge and award niggers on the basis of how well they perform their sacred duty of keeping the white devils on top. Brother, there is no limit to the shit a nigger won't eat just for the right of being one of Whitey's house niggers. Now you take this guy Whitey Young -- out

of deference to the starring role he plays, we call him Mr. Whitey Young -- That ought to tickle him to death. They say he is a big nigger. Anyway, when the man got ready and muffle the brother's cry of foul shit in Vietnam, he held out a collar and chain and whistled and up jumped ol' Whitey Young. Brother, that Tombo really put the brothers down and raised the devil to high heaven. Well, souls are taking names and Mr. Whitey Young is right up there next to the devil himself. There is another phased out brother called Brookie. He's already lost. He's got it so bad that he cries like a messed over punk every time the man lets him kiss his ass. He's wasted. . .

You are sleeping on a bunk in a barracks again. What a luxury! You ooze off to sleep like floating on air. Your mind glides through space. You are neither asleep nor awake. In a strange way you are alive. You journey back into time. You hear voices singing. You are standing on the corner. There is a demonstration. The black kids are shaking Charlie up. They are tugging fiercely at the chains of slavery. They are desperately trying to remove the consequences of 400 years of shame and racial savagery. They are sounding reveille for the black man. Great multitudes of racist whites gather to heckle, to maim, to intimidate and to frustrate. Burly apes of white men spit in the faces of black girls. They sadistically and laughingly grind lighted cigarettes against the buttocks of black girls. They insultingly proposition and curse them. The black boys who try to shield the defenseless black girls are viciously laid out by goon squads of thugs swinging heavy chains and tire rods. The big gorilla-type red-necked cops twirl their clubs and laughingly look the other way. Blood is all over the street. Blood is in the Jim Crowed joint. It is the blood of Black Americans who peacefully and prayerfully sought their human rights. Brother, I'm talking about getting monked up for seeking human rights in Christian America, the "free world." The racist America that the black man is fighting and dying for . . .And Brother, the man says he is in Vietnam to give the people a chance to form their own government, free from outside interference and coercion. Yes, the God damned hypocrite piously and shamelessly claims to be defending democracy in Vietnam, and he has the audacity to draft black men to fight a white man's racist action in colored Vietnam. Brother, as a case of adding insult to injury, the two-legged devil has the gall to tell a spook, who can't even use a public toilet without running the risk of losing his balls, that he is fighting in Vietnam for democracy and self-determination. Brother, what in the hell do they take us to be ? What do they think we are? They take Whitey Young to Saigon to observe a phoney Vietnamese election while the cracker devils in Mississippi lay a terrible hurting on dark folks for trying to vote there. A grinning ass

"The racist America the black man is fighting and dying for" — Philadelphia (Phila., Miss. this time) during the James Meredith march — L. G. Henry.

nigger is in Vietnam trying to help whitewash a Honky trick worked up against other oppressed colored people while the polls are just as crooked and unobserved as a snake haint. A few niggers go to Congress and the man expects you to flip. He says this shows progress. In a way he sorta pisses in your face and says, "now ain't you glad to be my nigger?" You cop a plea for bread, for a fair break and he laughs and says, "everybody in America's always had a fair break. This is what America's all about. Anybody who can't make it here is sorry, shiftless and a never-do-well."

The brothers and sisters on the corner are singing louder. It seems that they will burst a blood vessel trying to wake the niggers up. A Vietnamese is standing in the crowd, she looks just like a soul sister. Charlie doesn't know she is Vietnamese. To him, what's the difference anyhow, a nigger's a nigger and a gook's a gook. He kills a brother mistakenly in Vietnam and swears that he thought he was a V.C. Well Bro, it all is based on his sight of things. The brothers and sisters are singing louder and louder. You can see the strained veins expand in their necks until they look like vines growing around a tree. The black people start to wake. There is a sea of angry black faces. They are singing loud enough for the whole world to hear them. The brothers in Vietnam are straining to hear. They lie in their bunks, thinking, dreaming. In their foxholes, they grapple with fearful nightmares. In the silence of the night they listen with all their might. They say that on a quiet night if you listen hard enough and long enough you can hear the angry black people tugging fiercely at their chains all over America. You can hear them singing to wake the dark people up.

It is strange how flashes of the past come back to you, voices, faces, old familiar places. Just out of the clear blue a few lines and words of a song come back, they stand out. You hear them deep within your memory and though you know that this is merely a figment of the past, you feel yourself consoled just the same. Its funny how you keep hearing these certain words:

Oh people can you stand it? Tell me
how you can,
Will you be an Uncle Tom, or will you
be a man?
...Don't Tom for Mr. Charlie, don't
listen to his lies
We Black folks haven't got a chance
unless we organize...

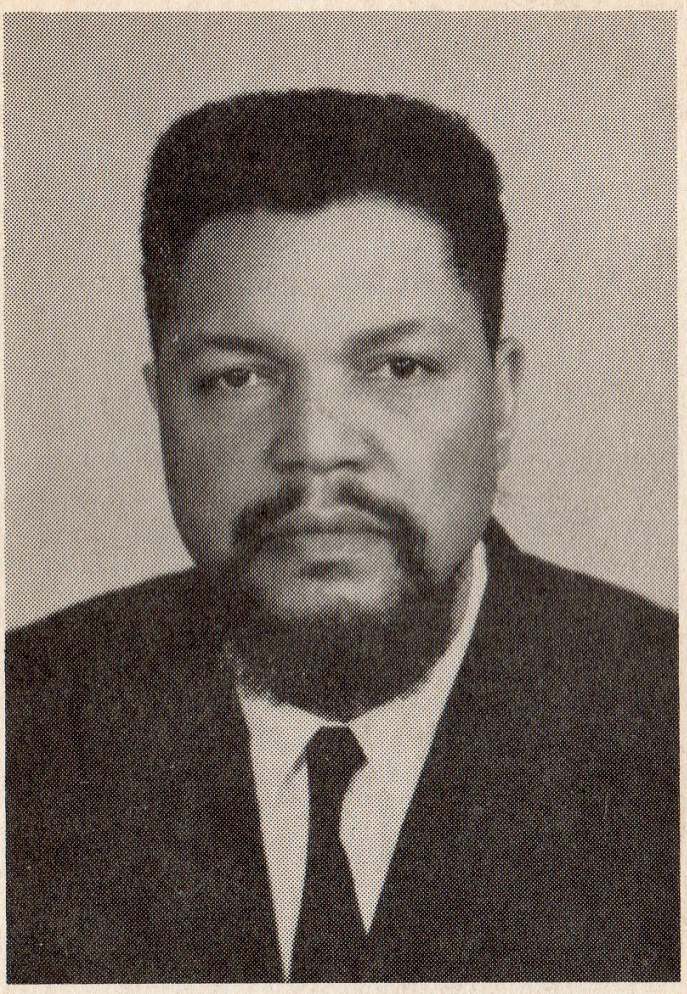
All the haunting things that keep running through your mind, all the crap you've seen, its a monked up world; if you are not a psycho case, you are damned lucky. How could you really know? You could be all messed up. Phycho? A nigger turned psycho in war? Whitey says all niggers are crazy...thinking, non-Tom niggers, that is. Niggers always fall short of qualifications when it comes to being entitled to equality, justice and democracy...But there aint no bars put on the nigger when it comes time for cannon fodder to make action to cover for his phoney bull jiving. I guess a scobe's really got to be a little touched in his head to fight like a loyal dog against his own best interest, to fight for everybody else's so-called freedom but his own. Now, can you beat this mother------? The man kicks your mother's ass, trains you like a nigger-biting vicious police dog, arms you with his latest shit and sends you 10,000 miles to terrorize other innocent and defenseless colored women and children, Brothers, what kind of a fool are we?

Two years, two weeks and some hours...that's what you keep saying to yourself. Like an honor con, you've built your time. Thirteen months you've been in Vietnam. Thirteen

months...it's good that you're not superstitious like the old timey colored folks. Man you will be cutting out soon. Going home...back to the corner and you aint gonna take no more shit from Charlie. You're gonna have your rights and you mean it...Cross your heart, you aint jiving. You've learned some bad stuff over here and you aint gonna be scared to use it against the white racist devils either!...

Its like the V.C. may have dropped a heavy mortar round right dead in the middle of the barrack. Its like an explosion bursting in your head. Its bad news, just like somebody may have awakened you in the middle of the night to tell you that your mama is dead. The big cracker platoon sargeant's voice is like a cracker judge, ceremoniously sentencing you to the electric chair for raping a white woman you have never seen. O.K., O.K. Mr. Whitey Sergeant, special messenger of Mr. Sam... I'll get my piece and go. You've conditioned me that way... like Pavlov's dog, you got me responding automatically. I bark and I bite when you say, Sir. Home? Yeah, that can wait... later for home, because right now you are ordering me to kill some more colored people before I split the scene, I'm concerned. I'm deeply concerned about the welfare of democracy in Vietnam. O.K. Mr. Charlie, the word comes down that the V.C.'s got a crack U.S. regiment encircled and pinned down and they are crying for a relief column. I'se your boy, tell dat old Kentucky Colonel yes, I'se from Dixie, hooray! I'se coming boss, I'se coming because I love you madly.

Like angry, ferocious dogs let from a cage, we leap from the chopper. It takes off in a hail of machine gun fire. Shells are exploding everywhere. You can hear the vicious rattle of machine guns echoing throughout the battle. Bodies are everywhere, some dead, some dying. You are pinned down in the open. The pitiful moans and groans of the wounded are rising everywhere around you. You get the signal to advance. In a flash, remotely you are on your feet. Suddenly you are knocked to the ground by an impact as intense as that of the kick of a mule. Your belly is burning like all hell. You are hit! No, it can't be...not you, it's time for you to go home. You clutch your stomach. Your hand is full of hot thick blood. Now, you are really scared! You want to live. Why doesn't somebody do something for you? Where the hell are all the medics? Suddenly, you hear the blast of planes overhead. They have come to give you support. Your heart leaps for joy. You know this is your saving grace. This will give the medics a chance to reach you. You will be evacuated on a chopper soon... you know this will happen because they just can't let you die like this. The fast American jets are zooming by at low level runs. Explosions shake the earth. You hurt like hell. You feel nauseated. You struggle desperately to keep from passing out. Suddenly the earth explodes and becomes an inferno, hell. The world is burning, you are burning, you are on fire! You have been napalmed. The Americans, the Goddamned Americans...burning us! To them, a gook is a gook. You scream, scream, scream! No one is listening. No...Brother, you have been hurting, screaming and crying all your life. Nobody listens to a nigger's moans...nobody, that is, but the brothers. Brother, they are listening. They can hear you in Soulsville, Bronzeville, in the Bottom and everywhere black souls hurt. The brothers and sisters are beginning to move...and brother they are not jiving. Listen brother, brother listen...Wake up brother...Another brother done gone...How many more must suffer and die before Armageddon? Are you ready brother? I mean ready! Solid ready for action... It's time brother...We just gotta do it...you know what I mean... This time, we aint jiving cause being black under Whitey's democracy is a hurting thing.



Robert F. Williams

"Listen Brother" is a message from Rob Williams, a brother well qualified to speak. After his hitch in the U.S. Marines, he organized the first armed self-defense guard of modern times — in Monroe, N.C. He fought in and out of the courts for the right of Afro-Americans to be free.

Hounded from his own country and barred from European countries because of U.S. Government pressure, he now resides in People's China. He has announced his determination to return to the U.S. for a showdown with his enemies.